

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D I N

L A M B E T H - C H A P E L,

At the CONSECRATION of

The Honourable and Right Reverend Father in God,

S H U T E B A R R I N G T O N, *LL. D.*

L O R D B I S H O P O F L A N D A F F,

O N S U N D A Y O C T O B E R I, 1769.

By G E O R G E S T I N T O N, *D. D.*

Chancellor of the Church of LINCOLN, and Chaplain to the
Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

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M.DCC.LXIX.

Dr. *S T I N T O N*'s

S E R M O N

Preached at the CONSECRATION of

The Honourable and Right Reverend Father in God

SHUTE BARRINGTON, *LL. D.*

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

S E R M O N

DEATH OF

S E R M O N

Preached at the Convocation of

The Honourable and Right Reverend Father in God

SHUTE BARRINGTON, LL.D.

Lord Bishop of Landaff

I T I M. iii. I.

THIS IS A TRUE SAYING : IF A MAN DESIRE THE
OFFICE OF A BISHOP, HE DESIRETH A GOOD
WORK.



HE temporal Emoluments, which have been
annexed to the Episcopal Office, from the Time
that Christianity first gained a civil Establish-
ment in the World, have so often really made
it, and have so much oftener been suspected to make it,
an Object of Ambition to the Clergy ; that the Authority
of an Apostle may seem, at present, unnecessary to re-
commend it to their Choice, whatever it might be at a
Time, when a superior Station in the Church exposed
them of Course to greater Hardships, and severer Perse-
cution. But it is the *Work*, not the Rank or Affluence

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which accidentally accompany it, that St. Paul pronounces to be *good*: And if Religion or Virtue be of any Importance to the World, a Consideration of the Utility of this Office to promote and support them will shew the *Truth* of the *Saying* in the Text ; and obviate some Prejudices, which are weakly, though perhaps honestly, entertained against it.

THE Inattention of the Generality of Mankind to every Thing that is not forced upon their Observation by immediate Sense, is an obvious Fact. Their Incapacity to discover for themselves the Origin, the Extent, and the Importance of their religious and moral Obligations ; and their Unwillingness to impress them on their Minds when discovered by others, or even revealed by God himself, is no less apparent. The Necessity which most of them are under of employing a large Share of their Time and Industry in supplying their temporal Wants ; and the prodigious Increase of these Wants, both real and imaginary, from the Disorders of artificial Society, contributes still farther to engage them in merely animal Pursuits ; and of Course interferes proportionally with that Attention which is due to their spiritual Concerns.

It

It is manifestly of the highest Importance to the personal Happiness of Men, that they should be raised from this groveling State ; that Creatures, sent into the World with Capacities for religious Improvement, accountable for their Actions to the Author of their Being, and destined to exist for ever in a happy or miserable Eternity, should be possessed with a serious Apprehension of these awful Truths. It is also for the Interest of Society, that those strong Propensities in our Constitution which are naturally excited by the Presence of their correspondent Objects, but often cannot be gratified without private and public Mischief, should be restrained from bursting into Action, by Principles of wider Extent and more powerful Influence, than any Thing human can supply. In short, it is necessary that some Provision should be made for bringing home to the Bosoms of Men the Consideration of their real State ; that they should be called upon to reflect on what they are doing ; that they should not be left to fluctuate at the Mercy of every rising Gust of Passion ; but be reminded by assiduous Precepts, and perpetually recurring Memorials, of the great End of their Being, and the only Means of attaining the proper Happiness of their Nature.

To leave this important Task to the casual Zeal of self-commissioned Instructors, would be to make a very inadequate Provision for the Necessities of Mankind. It would be to let loose upon the World, with the Authority of Teachers, Persons of all others the least qualified to reform it ; to obtrude upon the ignorant and injudicious the idle Suggestions of Whim and Fancy, instead of instructing them in the genuine Principles of pure Religion ; not to mention, that serious Principles are quickly effaced from the Mind, unless they are struck deep by frequent and repeated Impressions : whereas, in this Case, the Efforts to inculcate them would be irregular and desultory, and consequently ill calculated to counteract the Effects of worldly Objects, which are always present to the Senses, and pleading for Admission to the Heart. To delegate this Care to Persons engaged usually in secular Business, and applying only a small Part of their Attention to what demands and will employ the whole, would be entrusting it to such, as cannot be supposed either the most able or most willing to perform it as they ought. To place the great Truths of Morality, obvious as they may seem, in a clear and convincing Light, is a Work of no vulgar Kind ; and not to be executed, to any considerable Purpose, but by prepared and exercised Talents. To explain the Doctrines, inculcate the Precepts, and defend the Authority of Religion, requires Knowledge more extensive,

Meditation

Meditation more profound, and Eloquence more powerful, than can reasonably be expected from vague, divided, and unappropriated Industry. Besides, the very Inclination to be instrumental in calling off others from their unreasonable Attachments to this World, depends upon our being raised above them in some Measure ourselves; upon our being placed in a proper Station for looking down upon the common Pursuits of Life with a cool Contempt and affectionate Pity, as incapable of producing Happiness, and as the usual Sources of Misery. It is in vain to look for this calm abstracted Temper, in the Degree that is necessary to produce any extensive Good, among those who, humanly speaking, cannot but be hurried away by the Torrent themselves; and stand in Need of the friendly Admonitions of others. Even with all imaginable Advantages for acquiring it, Complaints are made, and they are not entirely groundless, of its being too seldom found. What then might be expected to happen, if, while so many various Classes of Men are employed in supplying the Necessities of animal and social Life, there should none be set apart to remind their Fellow-Creatures, of deeper Wants and more important Relations; to point out to them a *future* Period of Existence beyond the Grave; to excite their Desires after spiritual and eternal Happiness; and inform them on what Conditions it may be obtained? And how can this Task be performed, but by Persons
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inured early to a thoughtful, contemplative Life ; and exempted, by an easy Supply of their Wants, from the Necessity of engaging in those Occupations, which not only engross the Attention, but make the Mind itself trifling, secular, and contracted ; and incapable of rising above earthly Things ?

THE Advantages of such an Institution are obvious in Theory ; and will be found, upon impartial Enquiry, to be confirmed by Experience. Regularity of Manners, and a Freedom from gross Vices, cannot well fail of being the general Characteristic of Persons, who, professing to instruct others in Virtue, can scarce be easy themselves under an apparent Contrariety between their Principles and Practice ; and who have the Reputation of their Order, as well as their personal Character, to support and maintain. It cannot be, but that some will be eminent Patterns of what they recommend ; and the Influence of a Body of Men, faithfully labouring, by Example and Precept, to inculcate the great Duties of natural Religion, together with the important Discoveries of Christianity, though questionable perhaps, and even imperceptible in particular Instances, must yet upon the whole be very considerable. And accordingly we find, that the Christian World, where alone this Provision for diffusing Piety and Virtue has been made in any adequate Degree,

Degree, with all its Corruptions of the Rule of Faith, with all its Deviations from the Rule of Right, has manifestly been preserved in greater Purity, than any other Part of the human Race. Whatever Share the Ministers of Religion have had, (and it would be a Reflection upon human Nature to suppose they have had none) in making Men attentive to the Concerns of another Life ; they have so far been instrumental in promoting also the common Advantage in this. For religious Impressions are the firmest Foundation of every social Virtue ; of Justice, Veracity, and Faithfulness ; of Beneficence, Candour, and Compassion ; of Sobriety, Industry, and public Spirit. Where-ever these authorized Teachers have been less immediately attentive to the common Rights of Mankind, and employed in aggrandizing their own Order, in Opposition to the general Good ; the Blame has not been wholly theirs. They were infected, in common with others, by the absurd Superstition of supposing, that Christian Perfection consists in the Extinction of every human Passion, and a total Detachment from all the Endearments of Life. Celibacy and Monachism were built upon this Basis ; and the Zeal of the Laity in establishing them went Hand in Hand with that of the Clergy. The natural Objects of Affection being thus proscribed, it could not be but that others would be substituted

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in their Room; and from Persons industriously sequestered from all Connection with their Fellow-Creatures, what could be expected, but Projects for their own Advancement; and Attempts to repay themselves in Power for their Loss of all the Comforts of Society? But a great Part of Christendom has already seen, and a greater still is in a fair Way of seeing, the Absurdity of these Institutions. It is much to be lamented, that the Odium they have excited, continues longer, and extends wider, than can be warranted by real Fact and common Justice. Suspicions of ambitious Designs against civil Liberty, and in Favour of hierarchical Tyranny, still continue to haunt the Minds of many; who might easily see, that the Persons they dread, have neither Ability nor Inclination to revive those antiquated Chimæras. Incorporated with the rest of the Community; united by the same Interests; connected by the same Ties; aspiring to no exclusive Privileges; deprived of the Means of entering into any selfish Plots; they may justly expect to be exempted from all Imputations. But such is the Fairness of Men to one another, that whatever Order of them is at all distinguished from the rest, be it only by the most trivial external Circumstance, shall for ever be looked upon with a jealous Eye, for their wrong Behaviour at one particular Period, and in one particular Situation, let the Danger, or even the Possibility of their repeating the same, be ever so inconsiderable and remote.

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NOR does the Injustice stop here. The Faults of Individuals are, in common Cases, imputed to themselves only. A shallow Declaimer will, now and then, be drawing Consequences injurious to human Nature at large, when he has collected a few Instances of personal Depravity : but a small Share of Penetration and Candour is sufficient to make any one see through, and despise, so poor a Sophism. Indeed, when the Reputation of collective Bodies, at any particular Period, is to be estimated, the Characters of those, who happen to compose them, though influenced by no Circumstances that can be supposed to operate uniformly and generally, will of Course have great Attention paid them : but to blacken a whole Order ; to entertain indiscriminately a bad Opinion of its Members ; and to ground it only upon the Failings of a few, who act in Contradiction to Motives the most likely to produce a contrary Effect, and actually producing it upon the Majority, is Folly, and Prejudice, and Iniquity, carried to a Height that would universally be thought insufferable in any other Instance.

It appears then, that if Piety and Virtue are worth supporting in the World ; if it be an Object of public Concern, that they should produce their genuine Effects, as extensively as possible ; there must be a separate Order of Men, appointed

ed to inculcate and to enforce them. The Care of governing this Order in its separate Capacity, (for in other Respects it must be subject to the civil Magistrate), is apparently too weighty a Trust, not to be provided for with great Circumspection. It can prudently be reposed in such only, as are Judges of the Qualifications requisite for the Office; and possess them, in a considerable Degree, themselves. If any peculiar Education be necessary for Admission into the Order, it must also be necessary for those who are to have the Government of it. The Propriety of this Restriction is, indeed, generally acknowledged; the chief Doubt being, whether the Authority should be lodged in many Hands, or may safely be trusted in one. The Words of Scripture are at first View certainly favourable to Episcopacy. If Refinement and Sophistry have contrived to make these seem indeterminate, the Practice of Christians in the earliest and purest Ages of our Religion admits of no Controversy. If this lays no Obligation upon their Successors, the Point must be decided, like other Questions of this Kind, by the Exigency of Affairs, and the Dictates of common Prudence. Now, republican Modes of Proceeding, however fitted for the smaller Subdivisions of Mankind, and the less advanced States of civil Society, cannot subsist so well in great, opulent, and extensive Communities. The Forms of civil Government have every where influenced those of ecclesiastical

ecclesiastical Polity ; and the Limitations of Monarchy in the State have naturally introduced among us a similar Plan of Church Authority, and correspondent Restrictions upon its Exercise. With whatever Terrors they may both have been armed in ruder Times, the gradual Advances of good Sense, of the genuine Principles of Liberty, of sound Philosophy and pure Religion, have stripped them of every Thing that is really formidable. It may be difficult perhaps to calm the frightened Imaginations of those, who can never behold the one without Turkish Despotism, or the other without inquisitorial Tyranny, in its Train : but if these wild and groundless Fears are to be listened to, they evidently lead to the Extinction both of natural and civil Power ; since neither of them is capable of Regulations that will prevent the Possibility of their being abused.

UPON the whole, our own Form of ecclesiastical Government is unexceptionable in itself ; is properly adapted to our civil Constitution ; and, if well administered, must be productive of great Advantages. An ignorant and vicious Clergy will be readily allowed by all to be a public Mischief ; since no Degree of Learning or Virtue can extort from many a Confession of their being a public Good. But what can so effectually prevent their deserving the Reproaches they meet with, as the Vigilance of a faithful Superior ;

excluding improper Persons from being admitted into the Order; superintending the Conduct of its Members; animadverting with paternal Authority upon the imprudent and immoral; admonishing all with Earnestness and Frequency to remember the Ends of their Institution; and rewarding the exemplary by a judicious Distribution of the Honours and Emoluments in his Disposal? The Power and Authority that are conscientiously thus employed, can never have been bestowed in vain; and whatever Marks of Distinction the Community shall think proper to annex to such an Office will be amply repaid in the Weight, Efficacy, and beneficial Influence of its Administrations. Nor should it be omitted, that whatever Advantages the Laity derive from their Instructors of the lower Orders, they have Opportunities of receiving also from the Labours of those of superior Rank; a Circumstance that can scarce be imagined to make them less attentive to any Kind of public Administration: and with regard to the principal one, immediately respecting them, which is appropriated to the episcopal Office, it ought to be particularly mentioned, that the Solemnity with which young Persons are called upon to ratify their Baptismal Vows in the Presence of the Bishop, and to receive his Prayers and Blessing, is well adapted to impress them with just Notions of the Importance of their Christian Obligations; and to secure the Performance of them, by
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adding to their prior Engagements a voluntary, personal, and deliberate Promise.

THE inseparable Union that subsists between the civil and religious Interests of Men, has led the Way to other Privileges annexed to the episcopal Office. The Propriety of these is to be defended upon the Principles of human Policy that gave Birth to them : but the Advantages immediately resulting to Religion, and of Consequence to the State, from the peculiar Functions of the Office itself, are unconnected with this Consideration. They are obvious to common Sense, and will be confessed by common Candour. They are such as may kindle the Ambition, and will reward the Toils of the Patriot, no less than the Promotion of the temporal Happiness of his Fellow-Creatures ; and a wise and good Man, conscious of upright Intentions, and determined to exert his Talents in the faithful Discharge of his Duty, may as innocently and as laudably wish to serve the Public in such a Station, as acknowledged Abilities and Probity are allowed to aspire to the Honours of other Professions.

THERE is nothing indeed which may not be represented in an invidious Light by Persons of a ludicrous or cynical Turn ; and the Ministers of such a Religion as the Christian should, above all Men, be cautious not to engage in any
fierce

fierce Competitions for worldly Advantages. They should not aim at all by unjustifiable Means, nor eagerly by any Means, at the Acquisition of Power, or Rank, or Affluence: but a scrupulous avoiding of Posts of Eminence, which must be filled by *some*, and which the Community is interested in seeing well filled, can never be the Duty of those, who possess the proper Qualifications for filling them with Credit to themselves, and Advantage to the Public.

THE Apostle's Permission *to desire the Office of a Bishop*, may doubtless be abused by human Passions; but the Catalogue which he subjoins of the Virtues and Qualifications, that are necessary for discharging it properly, will effectually repress the Confidence of every *considerate* Man, and fill him with the most awful Apprehensions. Some of these Requisites were probably suggested by the Circumstances of the Church at that particular Time: but that a Bishop should be *blameless, vigilant, sober, of good Behaviour, given to Hospitality, apt to teach, not given to Wine, no Striker, not greedy of filthy Lucre, but patient, not a Brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own House*, is of eternal and universal Necessity. To these moral Endowments should be added such also, as, though of a subordinate Kind, yet being adapted to the peculiar Character,

racter, and prevalent Modes of Thinking of particular Times, can no more be neglected in Prudence, than the former can in Duty. An Age of refined and polished Manners will be little disposed to esteem the Person, or consequently to respect the Office, or attend to the Precepts, of a Man remarkable for Rusticity, Awkwardness of Behaviour, and Ignorance of the Customs of the World, or the Forms of what is called good Breeding. Extensive and accurate Knowledge is necessary to secure him from Contempt, and much more to make him extensively useful, at a Time when Learning is affected by all, and really possessed by many. To the fashionable Efforts of Infidelity and Scepticism he must be able to oppose sound Principles defended by clear Reasoning. For so forward are many to dispute, not only the Propriety of the external Modes, but even the Truth of the essential Doctrines of Religion, that he will often be called upon to vindicate the Obligations of natural Piety, and the revealed Duties of Christianity ; and he must be able to do it upon the solid, substantial Basis of Reason and Scripture ; he must repel the subtle Attacks of Sophistry by equal Dexterity in wielding the Arms of Truth ; he must recommend Virtue and Religion to the World by animated, and commanding Eloquence ; and demonstrate their Practicability and Amiability by the Lustre of his own Example. In short, there are no Qualities,

ties, that can enter into the Character of a great and good Man, which may not be displayed to Advantage in the superior Offices of the Church; there is no Situation in which their Absence will be more generally, or more disadvantageously taken Notice of; or their Presence attended with more extensively beneficial Effects.

IN attempting to delineate such a Character, it is scarce possible not to recollect, with Veneration, a late admirable Model of primitive, pious, laborious, and learned Episcopacy. May a double Portion of that Spirit which rested on him, descend upon all who are raised to the same important Office! May they, in like Manner, diligently “*labour in the Word and Doctrine!*” May those of the lower Order take care to imitate their Example! And may all the People committed to their Charge, observing their Earnestness in the Cause of Religion, be prevailed upon to attend to their Instructions; and to “*shew forth, out of a good Conversation, those Fruits of Righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the Praise and Glory of God,*” and to the eternal Salvation of their own Souls! Amen.

